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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5617
INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUCNMEM/EU MEMBER STATES COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5618
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0287
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1158

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 003002

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - PARA 7 RENUMBERED PARA 5

SIPDIS

STATE NEA/ELA FOR ABERCROMBIE-WINSTANLEY/WILLIAMS/DONICK
STATE PM/RSAT FOR IRWIN
NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/MARCHESE/HARDING
OSD FOR KARLIN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/14/2026

TAGS: [MASS](#) [PARM](#) [LE](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: MISSING U.S.-ORIGIN WEAPONRY POSSIBLY
WITH ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES

REF: BEIRUT 2912

Classified By: Jeffrey D. Feltman, Ambassador. Reason 1.4(b) and (d)

¶1. (C) The Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) have a demonstrated good record of maintaining controls over U.S.-origin weapons and ammunition. The Department of Defense has conducted several assessments over the years, and found that there have been only a few instances -- all during the chaotic years of the Lebanese civil war -- when U.S. origin weapons provided to the LAF in fact ended up in the hands of other end users.

¶2. (C) However, LAF contacts recently informed Embassy Beirut that the following U.S.-origin items went missing from the Joint Security Forces (JSF) barracks in Marjayoun, South Lebanon during the conflict with Israel: 163 M16 rifles, four .50-caliber machine guns (M2), and 79,703 rounds of 5.56 mm cartridge. This represents the largest ever breach of LAF controls over U.S.-origin weapons. The LAF has provided us with the serial numbers of the missing items.

¶3. (C) Our LAF contacts claim that these weapons and ammunition were seized by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) during the recent conflict with Hizballah militants. Since the JSF -- a combined LAF and Internal Security Forces (ISF) organization -- was considered a non-combatant in the conflict, there is little basis for the seizure (if it is true).

¶4. (C) If the IDF has these items, we should recommend they be returned expediently to the LAF via UNIFIL. The LAF is in desperate need of effective weaponry as a deterrent against Hizballah and other militias in Lebanon (reftel). The LAF is also supplying lists of missing weaponry and ammunition to UNIFIL to request their return by the IDF, so it is in the interest of the Israelis to resolve the issue now -- particularly in the case of U.S.-origin items -- before this becomes a public issue. If, by contrast, there is evidence that these weapons passed into Hizballah rather than Israeli hands, we would like that information as well.

15. (C) Embassy Beirut has passed the information on the missing items through our Defense Attache to Embassy Tel Aviv and hopes for an IDF response in the very near term.
FELTMAN